

# RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## *Quarterly*

VOLUME VII No. 4

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Our silent ones! Their very dust is precious  
In our longing eyes;  
Oh, guard ye well the sacred trust,  
Till God's own voice shall bid them rise.  
J.C.R.D.

The Society publishes the *Quarterly* for its members in the interests of preserving and studying the history of the Rutland Community which comprises the towns of West Rutland, Rutland, Proctor and the City of Rutland. The Society maintains and operates a museum at 101 Center Street, Rutland, in the former Bank of Rutland building (built 1825), now owned by the City of Rutland and leased to the Society at no charge.

Due to the high costs of heating the museum building during the cold weather the Museum will be closed this fall and winter but will reopen on Saturday, May 27, 1978 from 1:00 to 5:00 P.M. every day except Monday until September 3. During September and until October 15, 1978 the Museum will be open weekends from 1:00 to 5:00 P.M.

During the off-season the Society will by no means be inactive. Periodic meetings open to the public will be held from time to time with announcements appearing in the local newspaper. Exhibits in downtown store windows will be maintained, made possible through the cooperation of local merchants, and the work of our curator, Lynn Traina.

Lynn Traina comes to the Society through the CETA program and she will be cataloging and indexing new acquisitions; planning and mounting exhibits, both downtown and at the Museum; and will be preparing "hands-on" kits for our school program. Ms. Traina has studied at Castleton and is learning the many chores necessary to run a museum and its archives. She started work August 23, 1977 and she brings to her work enthusiasm and a high degree of motivation, together with an aptitude for the demanding work of the Society.

Membership in the Society is open to all. Please don't feel you need be sponsored by anyone. See the enclosed card for further details.

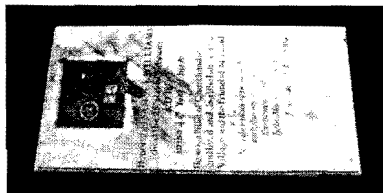
The treasurer is understandably pleased with the response of members who have upgraded their memberships from Regular to Contributing. With today's high costs the regular dues of \$2.00 barely cover the costs of printing and mailing the *Quarterly*. Circulation of the *Quarterly* to members is just over 450, including almost a dozen libraries from Texas to Wisconsin to Mass.

Gifts or bequests of money or articles of local historical interest are welcome at all times, and are deductible for income tax purposes since the Society is a non-profit corporation chartered by the State of Vermont and certified by the Internal Revenue Service.

Editor: F. P. Elwert

Curator: Lynn D. Traina

### The Cover



To photograph grave stones in Rutland cemeteries it is rarely necessary to use a stepladder. Warren W. Dexter obviously needed one—and the use of a wide-angle lens—to preserve on film the horizontal stone over the grave of one of Rutland's more illustrious sons, the *Hon.* Samuel Williams (not to be confused, if you please, with the *Rev.* Samuel Williams). Both were founders of the *Rutland Herald* and are buried in Main Street cemetery. The results of Dexter's work is shown at the left.

## God's Acre. Rutland Town

Of Rutland's first burial ground, the Rev. Norman Seaver, speaking at the dedication of Evergreen Cemetery in 1861, says . . . "here the forefathers of the hamlet sleep, and it would be interesting could we . . . determine the names, ages and circumstances of those fathers and mothers of this then infant town, into whose labors we have entered, and the fruits of whose self-sacrifice we now enjoy. This we cannot do. For though Rutland has since furnished half the continent with the material with which affection designates and adorns the resting places of its lost objects, at that time the marble and slate lay undisturbed beneath its forest covering, and the first settlers, if they marked the graves of their departed with any outward memorial, probably employed the only material at their command, namely wood, which wind and wet have long since destroyed. Tradition would for a while longer point out the graves, and tell the names of the departed, and then tradition itself is silent, and we are left without a guide . . ."

This acre, across the old Castleton highway from the first log meeting house, was conveyed in June of 1784, by Col. James Mead, to the town as a burial ground. A month later the mortal remains of Rutland's first citizen, Capt. Joseph Bowker, were laid to rest, marked, as the Rev. Seaver surmised, by a crude wooden slab. In the years immediately following the opening of the prestigious Evergreen Cemetery across the highway, grave markers and the remains of many of the early settlers were removed to Evergreen. Later, after the Methodist church which bordered on the east had become, successively, a marble company store and a town hall, a strip of land off the east end of the cemetery was used as a driveway.

The management of this cemetery, (and the Cheney Hill Cemetery) is the responsibility of Town of Rutland Cemetery Commissioners: Sherwin Williams, Byron Hathaway and George J. Livak. Annual budget (both cemeteries): \$300.00.



*Courtesy: John Sabotka*

This issue is devoted to those cemeteries of Rutland which were in existence before 1850. The noble sentiments expressed by Mrs. Dorr, with several notable exceptions, have been given lip service since the day in 1861 when her hymn was sung at the dedication of Evergreen Cemetery (the excerpt on the cover is the last stanza). This report presents photographs of the cemeteries visited without editorial comment.

### **Main Street Cemetery. City of Rutland**

This small burial ground was a direct result of the schism of the East Parish of the Congregational Church from the founding parish in Center Rutland. A new East Parish church was erected on the site now occupied by a gas station at 145 North Main Street. The sloping ground to the north was used as a burial ground from about 1787 to 1817.

Management for Main Street and West Street Cemeteries rests with a Board of Cemetery Commissioners of the City of Rutland, comprising Mrs. Earl B. Smith, Robert A. Tedesco and Kenneth N. Hart. Annual budget (both cemeteries): \$3,000.00.

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Due to traffic on North Main Street and lack of on-street parking, visitors will find the parking area for the tennis courts of Rotary field, just off North Street, convenient.



### West Street Cemetery. City of Rutland

"In 1817," to quote the Rev. Seaver, "during a very wet spring, the Main Street cemetery was so obviously unfit . . . that Judge Strong . . . obtained that portion of land lying on West Street . . .". This cemetery may have been opened for burials sooner than 1817 for some stones there bear earlier dates. At the time this burial ground was proposed there was some dissatisfaction because the site was in what was then farm land isolated from the village of East Rutland on the hill. Some forty years ago West Street cemetery was proposed as the site of a city parking lot. West Street cemetery was the principal secular burying ground until the opening of Evergreen in 1861.



## Pleasant Street Cemetery. West Rutland

When, in 1787, some of the Rutland parish moved easterly, the founding parish also left its log meeting house at the Center and moved westward—to the foot of what is now Pleasant Street. There, on land deeded by William Roberts and his son, the parish constructed its second home, a white frame church, with a burying ground immediately to the north. Clustered near the church are the graves of many of the early settlers in this parish, including the first minister, the Rev. Benejah Roots. Here, too, is the stone commemorating his friend and colleague, the Rev. William Emerson of Concord, Mass. Toward the north end at a respectful distance is what is known as the "Swedes' Cemetery," the final resting place of the Scandinavian workers in the marble mills and quarries. Over the sharp ridge which runs the length of the cemetery, and out of sight of the highway, are the scattered stones marking the remains of the early Irish settlers. Other Irish pioneers are buried in Center Rutland.

The management is handled directly by the West Rutland Board of Selectmen who also have responsibility for Whipple Hollow and Poor Farm burying grounds. Annual budget: about \$250, supplemented by CETA personnel.



### Town Farm. West Rutland

At various times Rutland had three town farms for the care of the poor and indigent. It is only the two early ones which are of concern here. The first town farm was on Durgy Hill, lying on the crest of the ridge between Pleasant Street and the West Proctor Road. It was operated as a town farm from 1831 until 1876, when it was sold. A provision in the 1876 deed required the town, at its expense, to remove the remains and grave stones to the new town farm which had been purchased in 1876 and which lay on both sides of Clarendon Avenue in West Rutland. It was here, on the west side of Clarendon Avenue, and less than fifty feet north of what is now North Lane, that the bodies were re-interred in a small (approximately thirty by eighty feet) enclosure. A dozen or more stones mark the remains of "Unknown" or "Stover Girl" and the other paupers who found rest in the years just before and after the Civil War.





### Whipple Hollow. West Rutland

The adventurous souls who settled the upper reaches of the Castleton River in Whipple Hollow established a dissident parish, the "Orange" church just over the town line in Pittsford. The associated burial ground lies just south of the town line a short distance east of the Whipple Hollow Road. The Orange church lasted until about 1797 and the burial ground has since slumbered in peaceful neglect. Relatively undisturbed due to its isolated location, the grounds are now receiving long overdue work made all the more difficult by dead trees, poor fences, a pernicious growth of briars and many leaning, broken and horizontal stones.



A cursory examination of the six cemeteries cited shows many stones in need of repair and requiring straightening. In the City cemeteries some broken stones have been repaired from time to time as funds were available. It is apparent there are enough broken stones in the six cemeteries to justify consideration of commercial repair in a central facility where professional repairs can be made. It is quite likely Federal funds are available and steps should be taken to upgrade these irreplaceable monuments. A slovenly cemetery invites slob.

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